



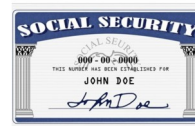
# U.S. EMBASSY — SANTIAGO

## SPRING NEWSLETTER



### Social Security Seminar

Presented by the Federal Benefits Unit



On September 23, over 120 beneficiaries attended our first ever Social Security Seminar held at the U.S. Embassy. The event highlighted the strong and continued cooperation between the U.S. and Chilean governments, who ensure that Social Security beneficiaries receive the best possible service while they reside outside of the U.S.



In attendance were a series of guest speakers from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA), Superintendencia de Pensiones de Chile, Banco de Credito y Inversiones (BCI) and BancoEstado. The speakers talked about the rights and obligations of persons receiving a pension from the SSA, the Totalization Agreement between the U.S. and Chile

regarding pension protections, and procedures for establishing electronic deposits of pensions directly to a bank account in Chile. As there are often uncontrollable delays with checks, beneficiaries were encouraged to sign up for Direct Deposit as a quicker, more reliable and more secure way of receiving their pensions.

There are no Social Security personnel in Santiago. The ACS staff can provide limited assistance to persons with questions on behalf of SSA in the U.S. If you have questions regarding Social Security benefits, Totalization Agreements, or procedures for getting Direct Deposit, please see our website, [http://chile.usembassy.gov/federal\\_benefits.html](http://chile.usembassy.gov/federal_benefits.html) or e-mail us at [santiagofbu@state.gov](mailto:santiagofbu@state.gov). If you were unable to attend the seminar, the section is planning to host a similar event again next year.



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Hours of operation: Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-11:30 am. Closed U.S. and Chilean holidays and the first Friday of each month.



## In the Embassy: U.S. Commercial Service

The U.S. Embassy is a large building that occupies nearly a block of Andres Bello Avenue in Santiago. Why is it so big? What happens there? In addition to the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Embassy hosts a number of U.S. Departments and agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), the Food and Drug Administration, and the Departments of Defense, Agriculture, and Commerce.



The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) is the trade promotion unit of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The goal of FCS is to increase trade by facilitating business transactions between local importers and US exporters.

U.S. government support means that importers will have more confidence in the U.S. companies doing business in Chile.

From Sept. 27-29, Santiago was host to the third Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF). Attending the ACF was U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke and other political leaders, entrepreneurs, academics and experts from throughout the western hemisphere. They exchanged perspectives on how to improve the competitiveness of their economies. With the challenges of the current global economic downturn, the Forum was more timely and relevant than ever.

FCS Santiago is positioned to access high-caliber private and public sector Chilean players and to host trade missions of U.S. companies interested

in this market. FCS would like to invite all companies owned and/or managed by U.S. executives to contact us and to be part of our database by registering at [www.buyusa.gov/chile](http://www.buyusa.gov/chile). You will be informed of trade missions coming to town and various business opportunities.



American and Chilean leaders united at the Americas Competitiveness Forum in September. U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Gary Locke, Chilean President, Michelle Bachelet, and Chilean Foreign Minister, Mariano Fernandez were among those in attendance.

### ***¡¡¡¡ HABLEMOS EN ESPAÑOL !!!!***

Proverbio y Expresiones chilenas:

#### **"AUNQUE LA MONA SE VISTA DE SEDA, MONA SE QUEDA"**

**(You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.)**

Ej. La Sra. Velasco tiene ropa y zapatos muy caros, pero está hablando muy fuerte y con la boca llena de comida. La gente dice "Aunque la mona se vista de seda, mona se queda."

#### **"HABLAR SIN PELOS EN LA LENGUA"**

**(To speak the "naked truth"- honestly and frankly)**

Ej. ¡Cuidado con ella ! porque *habla sin pelos en la lengua*.

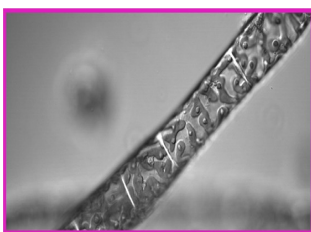
*Thank you to Susana Valenzuela, our Embassy Spanish teacher.*

## AMCIT Spotlight: Aaron Mann

Aaron has been a Warden in Santiago for 4 years and assists the ACS with outreach efforts and disaster planning. After his graduation from San Francisco State University in 2003 he began his PhD at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica investigating marine algae. This new section of the ACS newsletter turns a spotlight on a US Citizen living in Chile. The following describes some of Aaron's research:

In Chile, many of the seaweeds (marine algae) found along the coast are brown and hold a very high commercial importance. My research involves a small brown alga named Ectocarpus.

Ectocarpus has been found along the coasts of Chañaral, in the north of Chile,



The internal structure of Ectocarpus

where runoff from copper mines has contaminated the marine environment for 70 years. This plant tolerates copper in concentrations hundreds of times higher than occurs naturally and even many times higher than occurs in the polluted areas. Its ability to trap copper with substances it releases may provide new means of maximizing copper extraction during the mining process and reducing harmful runoff that can further contaminate the environment.

Ectocarpus is also the first brown algae to have its entire genome sequenced. Just as the sequence of the entire human genome has provided science with many new insights, it is our hope that the alga genome sequence will provide clues leading to a better understanding of this alga and other commercially important seaweeds.



Aaron, Pamela and Julien

## Calling All Wardens!

**What is a Warden?** The term "Warden" is derived from WW II "Air Raid Wardens," persons who alerted the public to danger. Wardens are volunteers who assist US Embassies in disaster preparedness, welfare and whereabouts visits, and alerting Americans to emergency situations.

### What does a Warden do?

Wardens share important information with the expat community and encourage Americans to register through <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. The traditional role of Warden volunteers is to relay messages and information to American citizens, but improved communications, news availability, and on-line registrations are changing the role of the Warden.



**What's next?** Wardens will always be needed to disseminate messages from the US Embassy. However, the role of the Warden is evolving and there are a number of ways in which Wardens can help. We'd like to engage Warden volunteers in a focus group to discuss possible roles of the Warden in Chile. These are among the ideas that have been proposed:

- Visit schools and businesses to deliver slide show presentations on emergency preparedness and crime prevention.
- Use commercial software to geographically plot registered Amcit locations on a map for emergency preparedness.
- Form a Warden Committee with focus on Warden development, warden training, and disaster response planning.
- Assist in planning a substantial and dynamic annual Warden Meeting.

**Are you interested?** The US Embassy would like to invite wardens to participate in a **focus group on Nov. 20th**. If you are interested in attending, please contact [SantiagoAmcit@state.gov](mailto:SantiagoAmcit@state.gov) by **Friday, Nov. 13, 2009**.



# Crime in Chile

Crime rates are low to moderate throughout Chile and moderate in Santiago, Valparaíso, and other major cities. American citizens living in and visiting Chile should be as careful in cities as they would be in any city in the United States.



*A crowded Metro station*

Street crime such as purse snatching and pick-pocketing are most prevalent in the metropolitan region (crowded tourist locations, shopping areas in downtown Santiago, the metro, bus terminals, and buses). Criminals often work in pairs; one distracts the victim and the other steals the victim's property. Be especially careful around ATMs, kiosks, markets, or anywhere cash transactions are conducted.

Scams are common. In some cases, someone will call, disguise themselves as legitimate employees of various gas or electric companies

and solicit information from the homeowners to gain entry or for identity theft. Tourists using taxis in Santiago should be alert to possible scams involving currency switching.

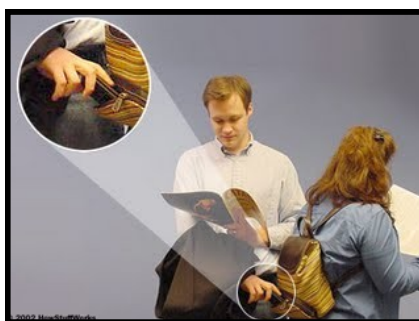
“Smash and Grab” robberies, where thieves reach through or break car windows and take your valuables from the passenger seat, occur often. Keep your windows rolled up and valuables out of sight.

Outside metropolitan Santiago, the chances of being victimized by crime are reduced. However, robberies and assaults have occurred in the Viña del Mar/Valparaíso and Pucón/Villarica area. Take similar precautions in these areas as you would in Santiago.

**Emergency ABCs:** In Chile, when you have an emergency, remember ABC, 123:

- 131 A**mbulancia (Ambulance)
- 132 B**omberos (Fire Dept.)
- 133 C**arabineros (Police Dept.)

**Tips on Avoiding Becoming a Victim:** Exercise extreme caution at all times in the metropolitan area and tourist cities. Beware of groups



*Be aware of pick-pocketing*

of youths who frequently work together. Keep in mind that thieves are not always easy to spot since many pick-pockets frequently dress in a coat and tie. Be particularly alert when using the metro and buses. Pay for items in cash whenever possible and only use credit cards in trustworthy establishments such as hotels and restaurants. Watch as the card is swiped and make sure you get it back.

For more information, visit the **2009 Crime and Safety Report** by the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) at <https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=106706>

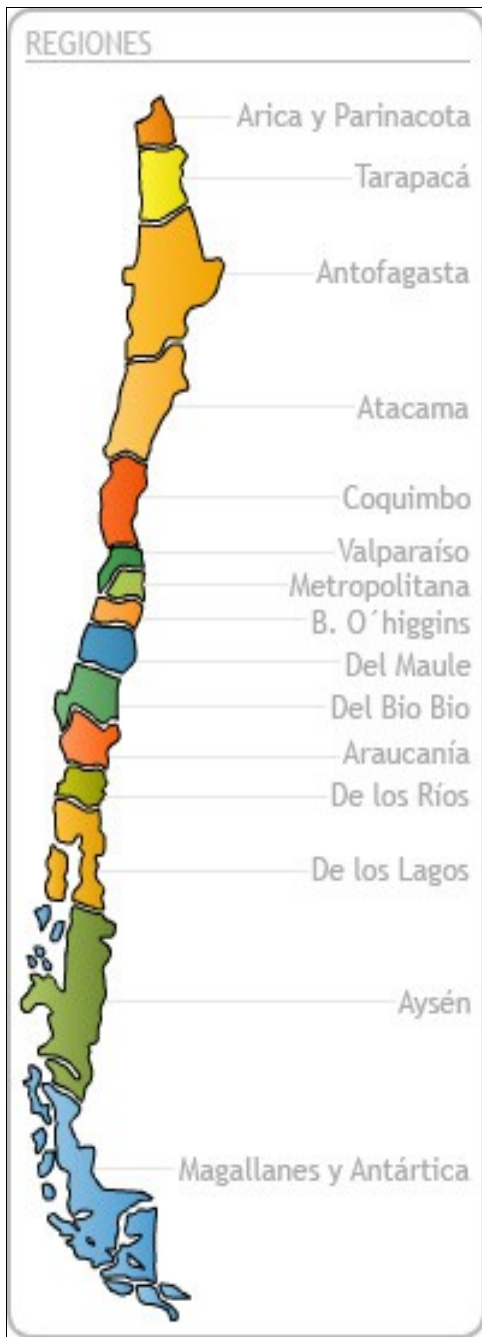
## REGISTER WITH THE EMBASSY

<https://travelregistration.state.gov>

When an emergency happens, the Embassy can be your source of assistance and information.

By registering with the Embassy, you help us locate you when you might need us most.

You will also receive warden messages, event information, and ACS Newsletters.



## Chile: Fun Facts

1. Chile is one of only two countries in all of South America that does not border Brazil (the other being Ecuador).



Sewell Mining Town

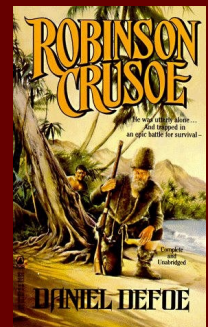
2. UNESCO has declared 5 World Heritage Sites in Chile: Rapa Nui National Park (1995), Churches of Chiloe (2000), Historic Quarter of the Sea-port City of Valparaíso (2003), Humberto and Santa Laura Saltpeter Works (2005), and Sewell Mining Town (2006).

3. Chile has competed in the Winter Olympic Games 14 times.

4. Chile is the world's 38<sup>th</sup> largest country. It is about twice the size of Japan.

5. The two gold medals won by Chile in the Olympic Games were in tennis. Chile has also won six silver medals (in athletics, equestrian, boxing and shooting) and four bronze medals (in tennis, boxing and football).

6. The Juan Fernandez Island inspired the famous novel Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe (A sailor named Alexander Selkirk from Scotland was marooned on the island for 4 years. His rescue inspired the novel).



7. Chile is one of the few countries in the world where selling an item to the customer and not giving a receipt for inventory is considered a punishable crime.

### PLANNING TO TRAVEL WITHIN CHILE OR TO OTHER COUNTRIES?

We recommend that you visit the Department of State website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

In addition to official holidays, the ACS unit will also be closed on every first Friday of the month: Nov 6 and Dec 4.